

4. The leather industry

282 There were eleven tanning or leather goods factories in
(432) Shensi and twelve in Kansu. Their total capacity was 180,000 pieces of hide per year, which amounted to only eighteen percent of the total production of hide in the Northwest.

Two factories were partly equipped with machinery. One was the Northwest Chemical Leather-making Factory in Sian, which had mechanical press, mechanical brush, sprayers, and its own generator. It used more than one thousand pieces of raw hide per month, and its output included shoes, belts, and other leather goods. The other was the Lanchow Leather-Making Factory, which had mechanized sander, sewing machines, pumps, and other equipment. Its products included leather and leather goods. The rest were small factories, using very simple tools.

5. The flour industry

256 There were eight modern flour mills in Shensi and two in
(433) Kansu, with a total capacity of 6,500,000 bags per year. On the basis that one bag of flour requires fifty-four catties of wheat, it was estimated that the total quantity of wheat used by the flour industry was 3,500,000 piculs per year, about 7.5 percent of the total production of wheat in the Northwest.

(433) The larger mills, such as the Hua-feng Flour Co. and Cheng-feng Flour Co. in Sian, and the Fo-hsin Flour Factory in Pao-chi, produce 3,000 to 5,000 bags per day. The rest were under one thousand.

6. Miscellaneous

388 (a) Soap-making. There were five small soap factories in
(433) Shensi and four in Kansu. The total annual output was some 35,000 cases, which satisfied only a small part of the demand for soap in the Northwest.

289 (b) Paper. Paper-manufacturing was one of the main handicrafts in the Northwest which may be found in many places, but details were not available.

339 (c) Cement. The first cement factory was established in
(497) Shensi in 1938, with a capital of CNC\$200,000. It had nineteen kilns which turned out six or seven barrels a day. In 1939, another factory was built in Shensi, with a capital of CNC\$2,000,000. Its capacity was around 18,000 barrels a year, but the quality of its products was very poor. Still another factory was under construction in Kansu, with a capital of 4,500,000. But up to the end of 1942, it had not yet begun production.

315 (d) Oil. Oil has been produced in north Shensi and Kansu for over a thousand years. But it was not until the early twentieth century that modern methods of extraction were used. Since then, five or six wells have been drilled in north Shensi. During the Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese government was very much

315 interested in the Yümen Oil Field. In 1940, one well was completed, and a small refinery was also built in Yümen.

*668 The Communist Period

47 The Communist government has paid special attention to
*175 developing the industrial potential of the Northwest, in order to remedy the unbalanced industrial development in the past. Up to the end of 1955, the major accomplishments were as follows:

*668 1. Shensi

*175 The most important industrial development in Shensi under
288 the Communist regime is its textile industry. According to an August, 1953, report, three new-textile mills, presumably the Northwest Number 2, 3, and 4 Plants, and one dye mill were under construction in Central Shensi. At the same time, three other textile mill were expanded. When these mills are completed, the Northwest will have an additional 136,800 spindles and over 5,000 automatic looms. The total number of spindles will then be three times and the number of looms 4.4 times those of 1949. According to an April, 1955, report, the three mills have all been completed, and a Number 5 Plant, with 100,000 spindles, was under construction. By the end of 1957, the total number of spindles in Shensi will be approximately 300,000.

A sheet and towel factory, known as Huang-ho Textile Factory, was built in Sian, first of its kind in the Northwest. It is expected to supply the people in the Northwest with over two hundred thousand bed sheets and bed covers of different colors and designs and one hundred and thirty dozens of pillow cases and face towels every year. Since it started production in March 1955, it has shipped many of its products to the areas inhabited by minority peoples in Chinghai and Sinkiang.

*668 In addition to the textile industry, they have built or expanded
*175 the following factories in Shensi:

(386) 1. A new paint factory in Sian is supplying more than fifty different products for the country's needs. This was completed in 1953.

• (256) 2. A flour mill of unidentified capacity was also built in Sian during 1953.

(395) 3. The expanded Tien Chiang Instrument Manufacturing Factory started production January 1955. Its output trebled that of 1954. The instruments they made were for geological surveys.

(339) 4. A mechanized brick factory in Sian started production in April, 1954. It will turn out nearly one hundred million bricks annually. Up to June, 1955, it has already supplied ten million bricks to the construction of buildings in Sian.

502 water was carrying considerable ice-floes, but one day, at a narrow part of the bed some miles further down, they were arrested, and in a few hours the whole river was piled up, mass on mass, with ice. The impact was so powerful that blocks were flung wildly about in all directions, and with one mighty solidifying spasm the iron grip closed upon the waters, and the Yellow River was ice-bound for months.

CHAPTER IV

LANCHOW TO LIANGCHOW

487 THE journey from Lanchow to Liangchow can, under favourable conditions, be accomplished in one week. Half-way between lies the town of Pingfan, at the angle where the cross-roads leading westwards to Sining and Kokonor meet the main North-West road.

133 A few miles outside Lanchow we traversed the dry bed of an ancient inland-sea, circular in form. The high-water mark showed clearly far overhead near the top of the surrounding cliffs, where the stone was worn into the shape of pillars. The bed was strewn with finest sand, and all the water procurable was very salt.

253 It was here that we met the first herd of yak, which was being driven to Lanchow for slaughter, as a large amount of the beef sold in these cities of the North-West is yak meat.

376 The fourth day brought us to the Pingfan valley, down which a watercourse rushed between banks of ice, supplying the power to work a number of flour mills which were grinding, even though their structure

• 256 788 was hung with enormous icicles. Here, for the first time, we passed a prayer-wheel, erected below a basin